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SUBJECT: PRC/LEBANON: SYRIA-LEBANON RESOLUTION IN SECURITY COUNCIL

REF: STATE 78356

Classified By: Political External Unit Chief Edgard Kagan. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) The PRC remains opposed to a new UN Security Council Resolution on Lebanon and continues to seek watering down of any UNSC call for Lebanon and Syria to establish diplomatic relations, but would be willing to support a Presidential Statement stronger than what Russia has proposed. During a joint May 16 demarche to deliver refotel points, MFA IO Department UN Division Deputy Director Yao Shaojun told Poloff, French Embassy Political Counselor Fabrice Mauries and UK Embassy Political Officer Jennifer Grange that Beijing believes that the latest draft resolution represents progress but does not go far enough to win the PRC's support.

¶2. (C) Yao explained that Beijing prefers a Presidential Statement (PRST) to a UN Security Council Resolution, which he doubted the PRC could support. Beyond the question of the best way for the Council to take action, Yao said the PRC continues to believe that reference by the UNSC to establishing diplomatic relations and delineating between Syria and Lebanon is inappropriate. However, Beijing recognizes the strength of the P-3 views on this point and is willing to try to develop an acceptable compromise along the lines of weakening the current draft's language in operative paragraph 4 (OP4) and presenting the text as a PRST. When asked, Yao said his personal view is that the PRC can accept the current draft other than OP4, but only as a PRST.

¶3. (C) Asked for Beijing's views on the draft Russian PRST, Yao said the PRC recognizes that failure to include language on establishing diplomatic relations and demarcating the border between Lebanon and Syria makes the Russian proposal unacceptable to the P-3. Yao added that "some countries" believe that a PRST should also include explicit references to Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace and sovereignty, as these were mentioned in Special Envoy Larsen-Roed's report. He noted that Lebanon has approached the PRC on this point.

14. (C) Stressing the importance of responding to PM Siniora and Special Envoy Larsen-Roed's request, Poloff emphasized P-3 commitment to a resolution and urged the PRC to support the amended text without trying to add new elements. French Political Counselor Mauries agreed, adding that the P-3 have made a serious effort to accommodate concerns about OP4 that appear to address Beijing's original objections.

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